United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 25, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee of Labor, HHS, Education and
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee of Labor, HHS, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As the Subcommittee begins its consideration of the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge the Subcommittee to maintain the Senate's investment in supporting a safe, healthy, and well-rounded education for all students. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law on December 10, 2015, included a $1.65 billion authorization level for the Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grant program (Title IV, Part A). The FY17 Omnibus bill provides $400 million for the program, which is a step in the right direction. However, we believe it was the intent of the 114th Congress, who passed the Every Student Succeeds Act, that this program is not only continuously funded, but funded at the authorized level.

While we are aware of the current budget challenges and constraints, Congress conveyed a strong message about the importance of funding the wide array of activities and programs available under the new Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grant program. The data are clear that to best support the academic success of our children, they must feel secure, supported and engaged in their school environment. Assisting states in making meaningful updates in technology, increasing opportunities to provide a well-rounded education, and implementing locally-tailored programs to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline practices are just a few of the activities supported under this grant program.

We have all heard from parents, educators, and students in our states who understand that students need access to a comprehensive education to compete successfully in the 21st century global marketplace. The programs covered under the Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grant program will foster a balanced 21st century learning environment. Moreover, they will support the principle that a well-rounded curriculum should never be a luxury reserved for some, but a necessity available to all.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to elementary and secondary education and ask that you continue to support our children by honoring the Senate's commitment to the Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grant program. Specifically, we ask that you continuously fund this program at the authorized level in the FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

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Sincerely,

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
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Richard J. Durbin
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Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
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Tim Kaine
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Mazie K. Hirono
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Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator